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**THE CORRECT TITLE: NOROPSIS ELEGANS** *Hübner*.

BY A. RADCLIFFE GROTE, A. M.

There are few species of moths, the Latin name of which has been given so variously as the very pretty insect which I venture to believe should be known in the future as *Noropsis elegans* Hübner sp. It is found commonly in the West Indies and in Mexico, but within the political boundaries of the United States is only hitherto reported from Texas, so far as I am aware. Not improbably it may be found in Florida and, like the "Spanish Moth," *Xanthopastis timais*, it may be found at points further north upon the Atlantic coast line.

And first as to the specific title. The moth is first figured by Cramer under the name *Phalæna hieroglyphica*; but at that date according to Guenée and the posthumous work of Moeschler upon the lepidopterous fauna of Porto Rico, p. 149, there was already a *Phalæna hieroglyphica* of Drury, a different species. The rule is: once a synonym, always a synonym, and at that time no second species of *Phalæna*, bearing the name of *hieroglyphica*, was permissible. It was then described as *Bombyx festiva* by Fabricius, Syst. Ent. 579, according to these same authorities. I find *Bombyx festiva* in Fabricius' Mantissa, II, 127, No. 157, 1787, which has no locality and is very briefly diagnosed as: *B. alis deflexis flavescentibus basi coeruleo maculatis apice nigro punctatis* and which is probably this species. But the same or a similar objection meets us with regard to the name *festiva*. There was already, according to Guenée and Moeschler, a *Bombyx festiva* of Hufnagel. The next name is *Diphthera elegans* of Hübner. Guenée objects to this name also, because there was another noctid called *elegans*, and this objection is sustained apparently by Moeschler. But there was no *Diphthera* of that name at the time (1810). It is well known that Guenée objected to the recurrence of specific names in the same lepidopterous family as liable to cause confusion. The genera being then imperfectly limited and the structural features not well understood, there can be no doubt that the evil of duplication was strongly felt. Yet there is no rule of nomenclature which would cover such change. It is now generally recognized in Europe, that a change, made in the same work by an author in a specific title proposed by himself, should be admitted. If admitted, then there is no limitation as to the name to be changed and, in the case of the changes of his own names, proposed by

Guenée in the 3d vol. of the Spec. Gén., it makes no difference, therefore, whether the change is made by him in the first or second use of the name. It must be followed and Guenée's request be granted, because the question of priority does not come into play. We have no right to change the second use of the name, when Guenée asks us to change the first. And there is no doubt that the use twice over of the same name in nearly allied genera is productive of confusion. In my own case I was led to propose to take "*nictitans*" as the type of *Apamea*, because Ochsenheimer had a species of this name in the genus which I wrongly took to be the common *Gortyna nictitans* L. sp., whereas it is a species or variety referable to the genus *Oligia*. But we have no right to change the specific names of other writers on this account and I think that the fourth name for our species, *fastuosa* of Guenée, must be referred to the synonymy. As there has been a neglect of the "*Mantissa*" of Fabricius, it may be well to include this citation in the synonymy of the species.

We have now arrived at what seems to be the correct name for the species, viz: *elegans* Hübn. But a difficulty meets us as to the generic title also. The generic title *Euglyphia*, from the Verzeichniss, is pre-occupied by Hübner himself, with the exception of a single letter, in the name *Euglyphis*. What is evidently the same name, even when distinguished by the change or addition of a single letter, cannot be again admitted. Here the question is quite clear from the almost identity of the terms. We cannot admit *Euglyphis* and *Euglyphia*, any more than we can admit *Oenosandra* and *Oenosanda*. The similarity would inevitably create that confusion which the rule was intended to obviate. The reason given by Herrich-Schäffer, Schm. Cuba, III, 8, for retaining *Euglyphia*, that the prior *Euglyphis* was "probably" not a valid genus, has no bearing on the case. The nomenclator is not called upon to judge of the validity of biological groups. Guenée proposed the generic title *Noropsis* for our species, while Herrich-Schäffer objects (*l. c.*) that this term is too near *Norops*, already used in zoölogy. If it were so, it would be a reason for a new term, and it is a delicate question, since the derivation is identical. But I am inclined to believe that the two are sufficiently distinct and that we may rest content in the title *Noropsis elegans* Hübn. sp., for the pretty moth and let it go at that.